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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP

~~INTELLIGENCE REPORT~~

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SUBJECT The Berliner Verlag INFO: [REDACTED]

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SUPPLEMENT

1. The Berliner Verlag was founded shortly after the occupation of Berlin by members of the Komite Freies Deutschland. It was originally supposed to be non-partisan, but the Freies Deutschland editors and managers kept it at first purely Communist and later purely SED. The firm publishes the Berliner Zeitung, the Neue Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung, and the magazines Start, and Nur Dich, as well as several other journals, either directly or through its supervision.

2. The Freies Deutschland members sent from Moscow to run the organization included Rudolf Herrnstadt, editor-in-chief, Gerhard Kegel, his assistant, and a group of former Wehrmacht officers who had seen service on the editorial staff of the Freies Deutschland newspaper published for German PWs, in Russia. Herrnstadt and Kegel had been refugees in Moscow since 1933. The Wehrmacht group, former prisoners of war who had entered Russian service, are:

- a. Captain Wilms, MVD representative on the staff, an intelligent man with a gift for organization, and a convinced Communist; he participated in active fighting on the Russian side.
- b. 1st Lieutenant von Kugelgen
- c. Major Lewis-Litzmann, holder of the Ritterkreuz, sent to Germany at the end of 1945 with a large sum (described by him variously as eight or twenty millions) to build up the publishing house.

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letter of 16 October 1947 from the
Director of Central Intelligence to the
Archivist of the United States.
Next Review Date: 2008

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Comment: Rudolf Herrnstadt is probably identical with the Herrnstadt who was a member of the Sonnenha group from 1937 on and alternated between Warsaw and Moscow. Wilms is reported in August 1945 as having been converted to Communism while in Russia. Bernt von Kugelgen was reported by two sources to be a member of the League of German Officers, and a Wehrmacht captain assigned to the 123rd Infantry Division.

CLASSIFICATION

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3. Other members of the Berliner Verlag staff are the following

- a. Sperber, original business director, who later left the firm on political grounds; now living at Drakostrasse 1, Berlin-Lichterfelde West, US Sector.
- b. Dr. Hermann Schützinger, trade editor until late fall 1946, who left because he was suspected of agent activity against the Western Powers.
- c. Dr. Harald Lauen, foreign affairs director for the firm, an attache of the German Embassy in Warsaw until 1939, former collaborator on Goebbels' newspaper Der Angriff. As a colleague of Heinrich von Gleichen, he assisted the Herrklub in its subsidiary Jungkonservativen Klub and wrote on eastern questions for the magazine, Der Ring.
- d. Captain Löwenstein, Russian, liaison man to SIA Karlshorst.

4. Through its contact with SIA and the government of Brandenburg, the Berliner Verlag at the end of 1945 bought or leased an estate, Gut Theresienhof, near Saarow-Pleskow. The estate, 250 acres in area, can house up to 300 guests. It is used partly as a training school for editors and officials and partly as a recreation center for staff members of the Verlag. The manager is Kirchner, who was active in the summer of 1945 as a Communist functionary in the Berlin-Zehlendorf government but was dismissed in September 1945 by American authorities.

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Comment: Kirchner, according to [redacted] source, was assistant mayor of Zehlendorf, dismissed for attempting to hinder the liquidation of Obote.)

5. Pre-publication censorship of Berliner Verlag issues has practically ceased. Articles on fundamental topics, however, still require advance approval.
6. In the fall of 1946, an SIA directive for an appeal to German nationalism brought forth a clearly nationalistic tone in SIA propaganda and an attempt from the Berliner Verlag to launch a large-circulation periodical for "German socialist intelligentsia." Prospective editors of this new organ, Das Neue Reich, were offered the enticing net salary of 1000 RM per month, plus a pound of meat or fat and a meal daily, and free weekends and vacations at Theresienhof. The cultural-political section was assigned to Dr. Herbert Ihering, but no editor whose name might have carried weight in nationalistic circles was ever found. The magazine was never published.

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Comment: Ihering was reported in September 1945 to be a newly-elected governor of the Kulturbund; described as a fellow traveler.)

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